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The Misha Tractate Taanith

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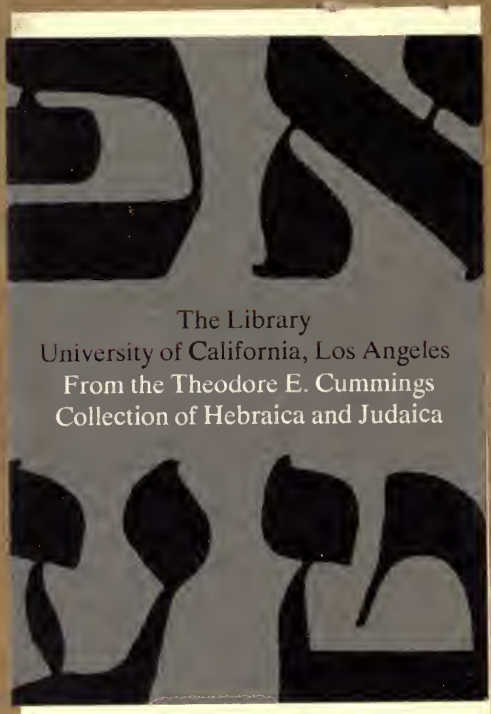

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The Mishna Tractate

TAANITH

(On the Public Fasts)

Translated from the Hebrew with brief annotations

BY

A. W. GREENUP

St. John's Hall, Highbury.

LONDON

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I.

1. From what time do they make mention of "the power of rain"?[1] R. Eliezer[2] says, From the first day of the feast of Tabernacles. R. Joshua[3] says, From the last day of that festival. R. Joshua said to him, Since rains are only a sign of a curse on that festival,[4] why should mention be then made of them? R. Eliezer answered him, I also did not say that they should be expressly asked for, but that mention should merely be made of them with the formula, "Who causes the wind to blow and the rain to descend in its season."[5] To this R. Joshua replied, If it be so, then mention may be made throughout the year.

[1] גבורות גשמים The manifestation of Divine power in sending rain: cf. Job v. 9, 10. The expression is inserted in the second (called the Geburoth) of the eighteen benedictions.

[2] b. Hyrcanus. A tanna of the second generation, and a distinguished disciple of R. Joḥanan b. Zakkai, who spoke of him as "a lime cemented cistern that does not lose a drop" (Aboth II. 10, בור סיד שאינו מאבד טיפה). It is said of him that he never spoke a word which he had not received from his teacher (Succ. 28*a*). As an expounder

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of traditional law he became famous, and was known as "the Great" (הגדול). He was excommunicated by the Sanhedrim for opposing the opinion of the majority on a question of Levitical uncleanness, and thereafter lived in retirement. A famous saying of his is: "Let the honour of thy friend be dear unto thee as thine own." See further Hyman, *Toledoth Tannaim ve'Amoraim*, i. pp. 161-175.

[3] b. Ḥanania. A contemporary of R. Eliezer, and fellow-pupil under R. Joḥanan b. Zakkai. His opinions are cited one hundred and thirty times in the Mishna, and evince him as being a faithful observer of the Law and consistently opposed to extravagant developments (cf. Yalkut Shim. II. 589). A famous saying of his is: "An evil eye, the evil nature, and hatred of mankind put a man out of the world" (Aboth II. 15). See further Bacher's article in *Jew. Encycl.* vii. 290, ff.

[4] Cf. Succ. II. 9, and note there.

[5] In the ninth benediction, known as the "Blessing of the Years" (Ber. V. 2), the actual prayer for rain is made at appropriate seasons, whereas in the second mention only is made of God's power in giving rain. The decision is according to R. Joshua (Maimonides).

2. Requests for rain are not made except near the time of rain.[1] R. Jehudah* says, He who acts last as reader of the prayers on the last day of the

feast of Tabernacles makes mention of the rain, but he who reads first does not do so[2]; on the first day of Passover, he who reads first makes mention of it, but not he who reads last.[3] How long are requests for rain made? R. Jehudah says, Till Passover has gone by: R. Meir[4] says, Till Nisan[5] is passed, since it is said, And he causeth to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, in the first month.[6]

[1] That is, as R. Jehudah says, on the last day of Tabernacles. The wind was observed for indications of the rain by the pilgrims gazing at the smoke of the altar; if it inclined to the North there would be copious rain in the coming year; if to the South but little and dearth would would ensue; if to the East all rejoiced; if to the West all were depressed (Yoma 21*b*). It was said that the South winds brought no rain after the destruction of the second Temple (B. B. 25*b*). * See note 2 on p. 34.

[2] There were two readers on Sabbaths and festivals, the first reading the morning prayers, the second the Musaf, or additional prayers.

[3] That is, "Who causeth the wind to blow" is said in the benediction of the morning service, but not in the Musaf.

[4] A tanna of the third generation, styled "the light of the Law." Remarkable for his sympathy with all branches of learning; and for his tolerant

attitude towards Elisha b. Abuyah, an apostate from Judaism (Ḥag. 15*b*). He lived up to his motto, "Do little business, but be busied in the Torah: and be lowly of spirit before all men" (Aboth IV. 12 [14]). See *Jew. Encycl.* viii., 432 ff., Hyman, op. cit., iii. 865-878.

[5] The first month, Neh. ii. 1, Esth. iii. 7 = pre-exilic Abib. Babylonian Nisannu.

[6] Joel ii. 23.

3. On the third day of Marḥeshvan[1] requests are made for rain.[2] Rabban Gamaliel[3] says, On the seventh day of that month, fifteen days after the feast of Tabernacles, that the last of the Israelites returning might reach the Euphrates.[4]

[1] The eighth month. Assyr. Araḥsamnu. The name is not found in the Bible.

[2] In the ninth benediction ברך עלינו :—insertion for rains applicable to the land of Israel only (Rashi, Succ. 10*a*).

[3] A tanna of the second generation, grandson of the Gamaliel of Acts v. 34. He terminated the opposition between the schools of Shammai and Hillel. "The ends he had in view were the abolition of old dissensions, and the prevention of new quarrels, and the restoration of unity within Judaism" (Bacher). He introduced an addition to the Amidah in the form of a prayer against sectarians, and the central feature of the

Pesaḥ Haggadah is due to him. His motto was, "Get thee a teacher, eschew that which is doubtful, and do not multiply uncertain tithes" (Aboth I. 16). See *Jew. Encycl.* v. 560, ff.; Hyman, op. cit., i. 310-318.

[4] That those who come up from a distance to the fast may be able throughout it to remain in Jerusalem (Succ. 47*a*). Those living beyond the Euphrates were exempt from the pilgrimage (Pes. 70*b*).

4. If the seventeenth day of Marḥeshvan has come, and the rains have not come down, pious individuals[1] commence a three days' fast,[2] on the preceding nights of which they may eat and drink. On the fast days they are permitted to engage in work, to wash, to anoint themselves, to put on sandals, and to perform the duty of marriage.[3]

[1] יחידים Explained by R. Huna in the Gemara to mean the rabbis. But the rabbis taught that every young scholar should consider himself a rabbi for the purpose of fasting (Taan. 10*b*), and that whoever was considered worthy of appointment as manager of a congregation was called a yaḥid (ib.). So יחיד came to mean a particularly pious individual as opposed to the many (הרבים, cf. Mark x. 45).

[2] On Monday, Thursday and the following Monday (Maimonides, *Taan.* III. 1).

[3] Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 3 (*τὴν ὀφειλομένην εὔνοιαν*: v.l. *τὴν ὀφειλην*).

5. If the first day of the month Kislev[1] has come, and the rains have not come down, the court[2] orders three fasts[3] for the congregation, on the preceding nights of which they may eat and drink. On the fast days they are permitted to engage in work, to wash, to anoint themselves, to put on sandals, and to perform the duty of marriage.

[1] The ninth month, Zech. vii. 1; Neh. i. 1. Assyr. Kishilivu.

[2] בית דין, the supreme court, the highest ecclesiastical and civil tribunal, delegated some of its powers to the "Small Sanhedrim" (סנהדרין קטנה), which consisted of twenty-three members and a president (מופלא). It sat every Monday and Thursday, these being the market-days (B. K. 82*a*).

[3] On Monday, Thursday and the following Monday.

6. When these days are passed and no answer to their prayers has been given, the court orders three further fasts for the congregation, on the preceding nights of which they may eat and drink.[1] On the fast days they are prohibited to engage in work, to anoint themselves, to put on sandals, and to perform the duty of marriage; and the bath-houses must be closed. If these fast-days also pass without

any answer being given, the court decrees seven further fasts; so that there are in all thirteen for the congregation. These seven are more serious than the former ones, for on them the Shofar is sounded, and the shops are closed, except that on the second day, towards nightfall, they may open the doors somewhat,[2] and on the fifth day still more in honour of the Sabbath.

[1] As they do on the Day of Atonement.

[2] For the necessities of the poor. Only those shops selling food are referred to, others must remain closed (Rashi).

7. When these days are passed, and no answer to their prayers has been given, they are to do less business, less building[1] and planting,[2] less betrothing and marrying, less mutual enquiries after health; refraining from these things like men excommunicated in the sight of God.[3] Pious individuals begin again to fast till the end of Nisan. If the rains come down in Nisan it is the sign of a curse, for it is written, Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto Jehovah, that He may send thunder and rain; and ye shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of Jehovah, in asking you a king.[4]

[1] Explained in the Gemara of the building of a house especially for a son about to be married (Taan. 14*b*).

[2] "What is meant by a pleasure-garden (נטיעה של שמחה)? It means putting up a regal banqueting tent for one's son's wedding" (ib.).

[3] Like men driven out of God's presence. In Gen. xxxvii. 10 וגער בו is rendered by Targ. ונזף ביה.

[4] 1 Sam. xii. 17. All the texts for rain in this chapter apply to the land of Israel only. Cf. "There is no public fast observed in Babylon except the ninth of Ab" (Pes. 54*b*)—since they have there no need of rain, and so no occasion for proclaiming a fast (Rashi).

II.

1. The ceremonial observed (for the last seven fasts) is: They carry forth the ark into the open place[1] of the town, and sprinkle fine dust over it,[2] and on the head of the Nasi,[3] and on the head of the president of the court[4]; then each one puts some on his own head. The oldest of them speaks before them admonitions to penitence: My brethren, it is not said of the men of Nineveh, And God saw their sackcloth and their fast, but, And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way.[5] And in the prophets[6] it says, Rend your heart and not your garments, and turn to Jehovah your God.[7]

[1] Various reasons are given for this. R. Ḥiyyah b. Abba says: In order that they might say, We have prayed privately and were unanswered, so now we humiliate ourselves publicly. Resh Lakish says: In order that they might say, We have been banished, may such banishment be an expiation. R. Joshua b. Levi says: In order that they might say, We had a hidden treasure but it has been profaned by reason of our iniquities (Taan. 16*a*).

[2] Maimonides says that dust was sprinkled also over the roll of the Law (Taan. IV. 1), whence it would appear that his Mishna differed from ours. See Lund's note in loc. רחובות של עיר: Cf. εἰς τὰς πλατείας, Luke x. 10; xiii. 26; xiv. 21, etc.

[3] The chief of the Great Sanhedrim and of its successors in Palestinian places. See *Jew. Encycl.* ix. 171, f., and Schürer, *Jew. People in time of Christ* i. 180-184 (Eng. trans.).

[4] אב בית דין The vice-president of the Great Sanhedrim. See articles mentioned in the previous note.

[5] Jonah iii. 10.

[6] בקבלה lit. "in the Kabbalah." According to the Rabbis the tradition passed from Moses and Joshua to the Prophets: cf. Moed Kat. III. 9. The word is not used in the Mishna in the later Hebrew meaning of "mystic lore." Rashi's gloss is: "Every place in which the prophet com-

mands, preaches and forewarns Israel is called Kabbalah." See Taylor, *Pirqe Avoth*, pp. 120, ff.

[7] Joel ii. 13.

2. When they make ready[1] for prayer, they appoint to officiate[2] an old man who is conversant with the prayers, who has sons and an empty house,[3] so that his whole attention may be fixed on prayer. He recites before the people the twenty-four blessings,—the eighteen used daily,[4] together with the six additional ones.

[1] עמד lit. "stand." Cf. Matt. vi. 5; Mark xi. 25; Luke xviii. 11, 13; Ber. V. 1.

[2] מורידים לפני התיבה lit. "bring down before the ark." The ark stood in a low place, since man must pray in humility, after Ps. cxxx. 1: "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee."

[3] A poor man. R. Ḥisda says: One free from sin.

[4] Known as the Shemoneh Esrah (שמנה עשרה), or Amidah (עמידה) from the standing attitude appropriate, in Jewish eyes, to prayer (cf. Luke xviii. 11). In the Mishna and earlier sources often designated simply as Prayer (תפלה). For history and contents see *Jew. Encycl.* xi. 270-282.

3. And these additional ones are the Zikrônôth[1] and the Shôfârôth[2]; then, I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, etc.[3]; To God in my distress I called, and

He answered me[4]; Out of the depths have I called to Thee, O Lord[5]; A prayer of the afflicted when he fainteth.[6] R. Jehudah says: It is not necessary to say the Zikrônôth and the Shôfârôth, but one can say instead of them, If there be in the land famine, etc.[7]; then, The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought[8]; after that the concluding formula of the prayers.[9]

[1] The second section of the Musaf prayer for New Year's day, healing of Divine remembrance, beginning "Thou rememberest what was wrought from eternity and art mindful of all that hath been formed from of old." See Abrahams, *Daily Prayer Book*, pp. cxcvii., ff.

[2] The third section of the same prayer, treating of Revelation, in which the Shofar is named either literally, or figuratively, when God sounds it as a call to Israel.

[3] Ps. cxxi. [4] Ps. cxx. [5] Ps. cxxx.

[6] Ps. cii. [7] 1 Kings viii. 37.

[8] Jer. xiv.

[9] Decision is after R. Jehudah (Maimonides).

4. To the first benediction[1] he adds: May He who answered Abraham in mount Moriah[2] answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel! To the second he adds: May He who answered our fathers at the Red Sea[3] answer you, and hearken to

the voice of your cry this day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who rememberest the things that are forgotten! To the third he adds: May He who answered Joshua in Gilgal [4] answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hearkenest to the t'rû'âh! [5] To the fourth he adds: May He who answered Samuel in Mizpah [6] answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that hearest (our) cry! To the fifth he adds: May He who answered Elijah in mount Carmel [7] answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, hearer of prayer! To the sixth he adds: May He who answered Jonah in the fish's belly [8] answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who answerest in the time of distress! To the seventh [9] he adds: May He who answered David and Solomon, his son, in Jerusalem answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast compassion on the earth!

[1] The first in the Amidah in which the interpolations are introduced. It is the seventh, beginning "Look upon our affliction" (ראה בעניינו). See Abrahams, op. cit., pp. lxii., f.

[2] Gen. xxii. 12, ff. [3] Cf. Exod. iii. 16. [4] Josh. v. 9.

[5] The blowing of a rapid succession of three notes on the Shofar. See my note on Succah IV. 9.

[6] 1 Sam. vii. 9. [7] 1 Kings xviii. 37, ff.

[8] Jonah ii. 2.

[9] "Although but six additional blessings are to be said on these fast-days, yet this is called the seventh, in respect of its being the seventh blessing in which additional matter is introduced; for the first blessing ending 'Redeemer of Israel,' is one of the eighteen blessings of the daily Amida" (De Sola). See note 1 above. The Gemara explains the reason for Jonah being mentioned before Solomon and David, because the benediction to the seventh must conclude with "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who had compassion on the earth" (Taan. 17*a*), for David and Solomon prayed for the land of Israel (2 Sam. xxi. 1; 1 Kings iii. 37). Symmachos b. Joseph said that the benediction ended "Blessed be He who humbles the proud,"—referring to Solomon's building of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 13), and to David's numbering of the people (cf. Ps. cii. 13).

5. There is a story that in the days of R. Ḥalafta[1] and R. Ḥanania b. Teradion[2] that a minister officiated[3] and finished the whole of the blessing without the people answering after him Amen.[4] He called out, Sound the trumpets, O priests. They sounded them. He continued, May He who answered Abraham, our father, in mount Moriah answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. Then he said, Sound

the trû'âh, ye sons of Aaron. They did so, and he continued, May He who answered our fathers at the Red Sea answer you, and hearken to the voice of your cry this day. And when this came to the knowledge of the sages they said, It was not our custom to do so, except at the eastern gate and on the Temple mount.[5]

[1]A tanna of the second generation and the father of R. Jose. He was, according to Jer. Taan. IV. 2, a descendant of Jonadab b. Rechab, and was head of a school in Sepphoris, living there to an advanced age (Tos. Kelim).

[2]A tanna of the second generation, head of a school in Siknin (San. 32*b*). A famous saying of his is: "Two that sit together and are occupied in the words of the Torah have the Shekinah amongst them" (Aboth III. 3). He was martyred in the Hadrianic persecution.

[3] עבר לפני התיבה the regular expression for officiating at the prayers, since the leader stepped in front of the ark wherein lay the scrolls of the Law. R. H. IV. 7; Meg. IV. 3, *al.*

[4] Cf. Deut. xxvii. 15, ff; Neh. viii. 6; 1 Chron. xvi. 36; Tobit viii. 8; 1 Cor. xiv. 16. What they said was: "Blessed be the name of his glorious Kingdom for ever and ever," the response made in the Temple (Tos. I. 13), where alone the sacred name was pronounced.

[5] Decision after the sages (Maimonides).

6. On the three first fasts the divisions of priests on duty[1] fast, but not the whole day; whilst the division in charge of the services[2] do not fast at all. On the second three fasts the division of priests on duty fast completely; whilst the division in charge of the services fast, but not the whole day. On the last seven fasts both classes fast completely. Such is the opinion of R. Joshua[3]: but the sages say that on the first three fasts neither class fasts at all: on the second three the division of priests on duty fast, but not the whole day; whilst the division in charge of the services do not fast at all: on the last seven the division of priests on duty fast completely, but the division in charge of the services fast, but not the whole day.[4]

[1] אנשי משמר The priests were divided into twenty-four divisions (משמרות) each of which took a week's duty in the Temple. Cf. Luke i. 5 (ἐξ ἐφημερίας Ἀβιά): and note on Sukkah V. 6.

[2] אנשי בית אב Each division was subdivided into seven, a subdivision being called a בית אב and officiating one day in the week after a regular order. See Schürer, op. cit., i. 216, ff.

[3] See note 3 on I. 1.

[4] Decision after the sages (Maimonides).

7. The division of priests on duty are permitted to drink wine at night, but not in the day; the division

in charge of the services neither by night nor by day.[1] The division of priests on duty and the standing men[2] are forbidden to shave, and to wash their linen; but on the fifth day they are allowed to do so on account of the respect due to the Sabbath.

[1] See Tos. II. 2, 3. The regulations are general, and do not relate only to the fasts.

[2] אנשי מעמד were the staff attached to the משמרות in Jerusalem. See below IV. 2.

8. Wherever it is written in the Roll of Fasts[1] that no mourning is to be made on a certain day, it is also prohibited on the day before, but allowed the day after. R. Jose[2] says, Both before and after it is prohibited. And where it is said that no fasts are to be kept on a certain day, it is allowed to fast on the day before and the day after. R. Jose says, It is forbidden on the day before, but allowed the day after.

[1] מגילת תענית was a book containing a list of memorial days of joyous events on which fasting was forbidden. The book, as we have it, is composed partly in Aramaic, partly in Hebrew; and it is divided into twelve chapters, each chapter dealing with the days of a single month.

[2] b. Ḥalafta (II. 5). One of R. Akiba's five famous pupils. See Hyman, op. cit., ii. 705-713:

and the reff. in Büchler's "Political and Social Leaders of the Jewish Community of Sepphoris in the Second and Third Centuries."

9. A public fast is not decreed to commence on the fifth day of the week, in order not to cause a rise of prices on the market; but the three first fasts are on the second, the fifth, and the following second day; and the second three fasts on the fifth, the second, and the following fifth day.[1] R. Jose says: As the first fasts do not begin on the fifth day, so the second and the last fasts do not.[2]

[1] Cf. Didache viii.: Αἱ δὲ νηστεῖαι ὑμῶν μὴ ἔστωσαν μετὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν· νηστεύουσι γὰρ δευτέρᾳ σαββάτων καὶ πέμπτῃ· ὑμεῖς δὲ νηστεύσατε τετράδα καὶ παρασκευήν.

[2] Decision not after R. Jose (Maimonides).

10. A public fast is not decreed on the feast of New Moon, nor on the feast of the Dedication, nor on Purim: but if they have begun one on these occasions they do not break it off, according to the opinion of Rabban Gamaliel. R. Meir says that although Rabban Gamaliel says that they do not break it off, yet he acknowledges that they do not fast the whole day; and so with the ninth of Ab, when it happens to fall on a Friday.[1]

[1] Decision not after R. Meir (Maimonides).

III.

1. The order of these fasts already mentioned [1] has reference only to the failure of the first rainfall:[2] but should the sprouts degenerate, then they immediately sound an alarm for them. And if there be an interval of forty days between the rains they sound an alarm for them,[3] because it is a calamity which will produce dearth.

[1] Mishna I. 5-7.

[2] רביעה lit. "fructification." "Why is rain called רביעה? Because it fructifies (רבע) the ground" (Taan. 6*b*).

[3] In the Munich MSS. there is added "immediately" (מיד).

2. If the rains come down sufficiently for plants but not for trees; or for trees but not for plants; or copiously enough for both, but not sufficiently to fill pits, ditches and caves, they immediately sound an alarm for them.

3. And so of any city on which the rains have not fallen, as it is written, And I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered,[1]—that city must fast and sound the alarm; and all the places round about must fast but not sound the alarm. R. Akiba[2] says: They must sound the alarm but not fast.

[1] Amos iv. 7.

[2] b. Joseph. Flourished c. 110-135 A.D. He favoured the cause of Barcochba and was put to death. As to his methods of exegesis Bacher says: "He had the art of deducing halachoth from every jot of the Law." Our present Mishna is founded on his codification of the Halachah. His famous sayings are given in Aboth III. 19-25. It is said of him in Jer. Sota IX. 10: "There arose no famous scholar (איש שהכל בו=אשכול) before R. Akiba, and the springs of wisdom ceased with him." See *Jew. Encycl.* i. 304-310: Hyman, op. cit., iii. 988-1008.

4. And so in a city wherein is pestilence, or a ruined building,[1] that city must fast and sound the alarm; and all the places round about must fast but not sound the alarm. R. Akiba says: They must sound the alarm but not fast. What is a pestilence? When in a city, capable of bringing forth five hundred able-bodied men,[2] three people die in three consecutive days, this is a pestilence; but less than this is not a pestilence.[3]

[1] מפולת Cf. Ber. 3*a*, "One must not enter a ruined building for prayer because it may fall in."

[2] רגלי lit. "footman." "Women, children and old men past work are excluded" (Maimonides, Hil. Taan. II. 5).

[3] The following illustration is given in the Gemara: "A town like Ptolemais, which can furnish fifteen hundred men and three deaths occur on each of three consecutive days, is said to be afflicted with pestilence; but if all the deaths occurred on a single day or in four days, it is not said to be afflicted with pestilence."

5. For these things they sound the alarm in every place,—for blasting and mildew, for locusts and caterpillars, for evil wild beasts,[1] and for armies passing through the country;[2] for these they sound the alarm since they are calamities which spread evils.

[1] If they appear in the daytime in a town. See the following Mishna.

[2] Even if they be friendly armies. See Tos. II. 10, and Maimonides Hil. Taan. II. 4 ("Armies passing through the land of Israel, even if there be no war between them and Israel, are a cause of distress"). Rashi, however, thinks the reference to be to hostile armies only.

6. There is a story that some elders[1] went down from Jerusalem to their own cities, and decreed a fast, because there had been seen in Ascalon a blasting of such size as would cover an oven's mouth.[2] And they also decreed a fast because wolves had devoured two children beyond Jordan. R. Jose says:

It was not because they had devoured them, but because they were seen (in the towns).

[1] זקנים = πρεσβύτεροι (cf. Mk. xi. 27) denotes generally the members of the Sanhedrim ; but is also used of those members who were neither ἀρχιερεῖς nor γραμματεῖς.

[2] כמלא פי תנור. The simplest explanation seems to be: a place on the ground whose dimensions were only the size of an oven's mouth (Maimonides). See Lund, however.

7. For these things do they sound the alarm even on Sabbath,—for a city encompassed by enemies or by a flood ; for a ship in danger by being tossed about on the sea. R. Jose says : It is sounded to obtain help from men, not for prayer to God. Simeon the Temanite [1] says : Even for a pestilence (shall they sound the alarm on Sabbath). But the sages did not agree with him in this opinion.[2]

[1] A tanna of the second generation, so called because he came from Teman, a district in the north of Edom (cf. Ezek. xxv. 13). See Frankel, מבוא p. ק"ח.

[2] The opinions of R. Jose and of Simeon are not to be followed. They only fast for a pestilence, not sound an alarm ; and one can cry to God and fast without sounding an alarm for the dangers mentioned (Maimonides).

8. For every plague (may it not befall the congregation!) they sound the alarm, except for a superabundance of rain.[1] There is a story that they said to Ḥoni,[2] the circle drawer, Pray that the rains may come down. He said to them, Go out and collect the Passover ovens,[3] that they may not be softened. He prayed, but the rains did not come down. What did he do? He drew a circle,[4] and stood in the middle of it, and prayed: O Lord of the universe, thy children have looked to me, since I am accounted by them a favourite of thine; I swear by thy great Name that I will not move hence till Thou have pity on thy children. The rains began to trickle. He said, This was not what I asked Thee for, but for enough to fill wells, cisterns, and caves. They then fell with vehemence. He said, This was not what I asked Thee for, but for favourable rains, bringing blessing and good gifts. They then came down in their usual manner, until the Israelites had to go up from Jerusalem to the Temple-mount because of the rains. They came and said to him, As thou didst pray for the rains to come down, so pray that they may cease. He said to them, Go and see if the Stone of Losers[5] is covered up by the waters. Simeon b. Shataḥ[6] sent to him and said, If thou wert not Ḥoni I would decree excommunication against thee; but what can I do to thee? for thou comest petulantly before God,[7] like a child who lords it over his father, and yet he does after the child's will. To thee may be applied the text, Thy father

and mother shall rejoice, and she who bare thee shall exult.[8]

[1] R. Joḥanan says the reason is because it is not allowed to pray for the cessation of too much good. The Mishna applies to Israel only where as Maimonides says (Hil. Taan. II. 15) the land is mountainous and the houses built of stone, and so there can hardly be too much rain. In Babylon, on the other hand, the alarm is sounded for excess (Taan. 22*b*).

[2] חונִי = Ὀνίας. A miracle-worker of the first century B.C. It is related of him that whenever he entered the Temple court it used to shine, and that he slept for seventy years in a cave (Jer. Taan., trans. Greenup, p. 91). The story of his death is narrated in Josephus, *Antiq.* xiv. 2, 1 (Whiston's trans., p. 299).

[3] The ovens used to roast the paschal lamb, which were generally made of clay and kept outside the house when not in use.

[4] A common practice with magicians. Some commentators explain the phrase ע"נ עוגה to mean that he dug out a circular trench and placed himself in it that it might appear as if he were sitting in prison.

[5] אבן הטועים A very high stone in Jerusalem on which were deposited lost articles. The finder caused proclamation to be made in the city מציאה מציאתי, so that the loser might claim the property.

[6] Lived in the time of King Jannæus and Queen Alexandra. He was one of the most formidable opponents of magic, and at one time executed eighty women who were guilty of its practice (San. 44*b*). He was instrumental in establishing popular schools throughout Judæa, and in restricting the number of divorces (Yer. Kat. 32*c*).

[7] המקום "The Omnipresence," an epithet descriptive of God, who is Absolute Space (Gen. R. lxviii.). Cf. Philo, *De Somniis*, ed. Mangey, i., p. 630.

[8] Prov. xxiii. 25.

9. Should the rains come down before sunrise whilst they are fasting, they shall not complete the fast; but if after sunrise, they shall complete it. R. Eliezer says: If the rains come down before noon they shall not complete the fast; but if after they shall complete it.[1] There is a story that a fast was decreed at Lydda, and the rains came down before noon. R. Tarphon[2] said to the people, Go out, eat and drink, and make a feast day. So they went out, ate and drank, and made a feast day; and in the afternoon they returned and recited the great Hallel.[3]

[1] Decision is after R. Eliezer (Maimonides).

[2] A contemporary of R. Akiba, and possibly to be identified with the Trypho of Justin Martyr. He states that he officiated in the Temple (Jer. Yoma III. 7), and told Justin that he had fled

from Palestine on account of the war (Dial. c. Trypho, c. i.). A famous saying of his, reminding us of the Parable of the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 1, ff.), is: "The day is short, the task great, the labourers idle, the reward great, and the Master of the house urgent" (Aboth II. 19). He is said to have favoured the views of the House of Shammai; and, on account of his learning, was called "the teacher of Israel." See Hyman, op. cit., ii. pp. 524, ff.

[3] Ps. cxxxvi. So called to distinguish it from the Hallel, Pss. cxiii.-cxviii.; but Pss. cxx.-cxxxvi. and Pss. cxxxv. 4-cxxxvi. also were called "Great Hallel." In the Gemara 25*b* the question is asked why they should not have recited before and not after their return, and the answer given is: "Hallel is not recited save with a satisfied soul and a full stomach" (אין אומרים הלל אלא על נפש שבעה וכרם מלאה). See Box's article in Hastings' *Dict. Christ and Gospels*, s.v. Hallel.

IV.

1. Three times a year do the priests lift up their hands (in the priestly blessing),[1] four times on one day at the morning prayers, at the additional prayers, at the afternoon prayers, and at the closing prayers.[2] And these three times are, on the fast days, on

the fast of the standing-men,[3] and on the Day of Atonement.

[1] Num. vi. 24-26.

[2] נעילת שערים lit. "the closing of the gates"—hence the prayer called N'îlâh. The reference is to the closing of the Temple gates, though Rab says it means the closing of the gates of heaven, i.e. when darkness comes. See the discussion in Jer. Ber. IV. 7.

[3] See below, IV. 2, 3.

2. This is the origin of the ma'amadoth.[1] It is written, Command the children of Israel and say unto them, My offering, my bread.[2] But how can a man's offering be presented if he stand not by it? So the former prophets[3] instituted twenty-four guards (mishmaroth); and corresponding to each guard was a post (ma'amad) of priests, Levites, and Israelites stationed in Jerusalem. When the time came that a guard should go up to Jerusalem, the priests and Levites belonging to it went up, whilst the Israelites who belonged to that guard[4] assembled themselves in their cities to read the story of creation.[5]

[1] מעמדות "stations," or "posts." The people, like the priests and the Levites, were divided into twenty-four courses (משמרות), representatives of which took their turn every day for a week to stand by whilst the daily sacrifice was being offered. See Tos. IV. 2. In Tamid V. 6 it is as-

sumed that the "head of the station" (ראש המעמד) was always present in Jerusalem.

[2] Num. xxviii. 2.

[3] David and Samuel.

[4] And who were not able to go up to Jerusalem.

[5] To remind them that the world was established for the sake of worship.

3. [The standing-men were fasting four days in the week, from the second to the fifth day; but they did not fast on the eve of Sabbath on account of the honour due to the Sabbath, nor on the Sabbath itself, so that they should not pass from rest and enjoyment to labour and fasting, and so run the danger of death.][1] On the first day they read the sections of Scripture בראשית and יהי רקיע; on the second יהי רקיע and ויקוו המים; on the third יקוו המים and ויהי מאורות; on the fourth יהי מאורות and וישרצו המים; on the fifth וישרצו המים and ותשא הארץ; on the sixth תוצא הארץ and ויכלו השמים.[2] A long section was read by two persons, a short one by one, in the morning and additional prayers; but at the afternoon prayers they assemble and recite the passages by heart[3] as they do the Shema.[4] On Friday they do not assemble at the afternoon prayers on account of the honour due to the Sabbath.

[1] The passage in brackets is omitted in many MSS., including the Cambridge MS. add. 470, 1

(ed. Lowe) and both Munich MSS., and in some of the printed editions. It is not in the Jerusalem Talmud.

[2] These passages are in Gen. i. 1—ii. 4.

[3] The reciting by heart is here mentioned as an exception, the rule being that the Torah must be read from its scroll (cf. Meg. II. 1, in respect to the book of Esther).

[4] The Shema consists of Deut. vi. 4-9, xi. 13-21, Num. xv. 37-41, and obtains its name from the opening words שמע ישראל, cf. Mark xii. 29. It is not a prayer, properly so speaking, but a confession of belief, and so the reciting of it (קריאת שמע) is spoken of, a custom attributed by Josephus (Antiq. iv. 8, 13: Whiston, p. 96) to the command of Moses. See Vitringa, *De Synagoga*, pp. 1052-1061.

4. Every day on which the Hallel[1] is sung there is no attendance at morning prayer by the standing-men. When there was an additional offering they were not in attendance at the closing prayers. When there was a wood offering[2] they were not in attendance at afternoon prayers. These are the words of R. Akiba; but Ben Azzai[3] said to him, Thus was R. Joshua teaching: When there was an additional offering they were not in attendance at afternoon prayers; when a wood offering, not at the closing prayers. R. Akiba changed his view, and taught like Ben Azzai.

[1] Pss. 113-118. See note on III. 9. The Hallel was sung on Passover night, on Pentecost, on the Feast of Tabernacles, and on the eight days of Ḥanukah (Tos. Succ. III. 2).

[2] See below IV. 5.

[3] A tanna of the second generation, his full name being Simeon b. Azzai. According to Ḥag. 14*b* he was one of four men who "went up into Paradise," i.e. indulged in speculative philosophy, with disastrous results in the case of all but Akiba, who "went into Paradise in peace and came down in peace." See *Jew. Encycl.* ii. 672, f.; Taylor, op. cit., p. 79 n. 5.

5. Nine days are appointed for the priests and the people to bring wood for the altar. On the first of Nisan the family of Araḥ b. Jehudah[1] bring it; on the twentieth of Tammuz the family of David b. Jehudah[2]; on the fifth of Ab the family of Perosh b. Jehudah[3]; on the seventh the family of Jonadab b. Rechab[4]; on the tenth the family of Sinah b. Benjamin[5]; on the fifteenth the family of Zatu b. Jehudah,[6] and with them the priests and Levites who had forgotten from which tribe they were descended, and also the family of Gonebe Eli[7] and that of Kotsi Ketsioth[8]; on the twentieth the family of Paḥath Moab b. Jehudah[9]; on the twentieth of Elul the family of Adin b. Jehudah; on the first of Tebeth the family of Perosh for the second time. On the first of Tebeth there was no

attendance of the standing-men, for then the Hallel was sung and there was an additional offering and a wood offering.

[1] Cf. Ezra ii. 5 ; Neh. vii. 10. [2] Cf. Ezra viii. 2.

[3] Cf. Ezra ii. 3, viii. 3, x. 25 ; Neh. iii. 25, vii. 8, x. 15.

[4] Cf. 2 Kings x. 15, 23 ; Jer. xxxv. 8 ; 1 Chron. ii. 55.

[5] Cf. Ezra ii. 35 ; Neh. iii. 3, vii. 38.

[6] Cf. Ezra ii. 8, x. 27 ; Neh. vii. 13, x. 15.

[7][8] See Tos. IV. 7 where these names are explained (as in Taan. 28*a* ; Jer. Taan. IV. 4).

[9] Cf. Ezra ii. 6, viii. 4, x. 30 ; Neh. iii. 11, vii. 11, x. 15.

[10] Cf. Ezra ii. 15, viii. 6 ; Neh. vii. 20, x. 17. It may be noted that the wood of the olive and that of the vine were not allowed to be brought (Tamid II. 3). In the Book of Jubilees xxi. 12 it is forbidden to bring any other but these woods: cypress, bay, almond, fir, pine, cedar, savin, fig, olive, myrrh, laurel, aspalathus.

6. Five calamities befell our fathers on the seventeenth of Tammuz, and five on the ninth of Ab. On the former the tables of the Law were broken,[1] the daily offerings ceased,[2] and the City was broken into, Apostomos[3] burnt the Torah and set up an image in the Temple. On the latter it was decreed that our

fathers should not enter Palestine,[4] the first and second Temples were destroyed, Bethar[5] was captured, and the City was ploughed over.[6] From the time when Ab begins rejoicing must be lessened.

[1] This is deduced from Exod. xxiv. 16, where by the seventh day is to be understood the seventh of Sivan, when the ten commandments were given. As Moses was on the mount for forty days (ib. xxiv. 18), he would descend on the seventeenth of Tammuz, when he broke the tables (Taan. 28*b*).

[2] Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* VI. 2, 1 (Whiston, p. 598). Cf. Dan. viii. 11-13; xi. 31; xii. 11, with Driver's notes ad loc.

[3] His identity is unknown. Kohler suggests that אפוסטמום may be a corruption of אסטפנוס, a Hebraized form of Stephanos, the name, given by Josephus, of the soldier who burned the scroll of the Law. Jastrow thinks it may be a popular corruption of ἀπόστολος, cf. 2 Macc. vi. 1 (Lex. p. 101). Ginzberg identifies him with Antiochus Epiphanes, "of whom, moreover, it is known also, from other sources, that he set up an idol in the Temple."

[4] Num. xiv. 1, ff.

[5] A large city in Benjamin, near Jerusalem (Eusebius, *Hist.* IV. 6).

[6] Cf. Jer. xxvi. 18; Micah iii. 12.

7. During the week in which the ninth of Ab falls it is forbidden to shave and to wash one's clothes; but on the fifth day these are allowed on account of the honour due to the Sabbath. On the day preceding the ninth of Ab no one may eat two dishes, nor eat flesh, nor drink wine. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel[1] says that it is enough to alter somewhat one's ordinary way of living. R. Jehudah[2] says that it is obligatory to place the mattresses on the floor[3]; but the sages do not agree with him.[4]

[1] Grandson of Rabban Gamaliel I. (Acts v. 34). Simeon was a tanna of the third generation and father of Jehudah ha-Nasi. He escaped from Bethar in Bar-Cochba's revolt, and after the death of Hadrian became head of the academy at Jamnia. He was noted for his wide learning in science and philosophy. A famous saying of his is: "On three things the world stands,—Judgment, Truth, and Peace" (Aboth I. 19). See Hyman, op. cit., iii., pp. 1163-1171.

[2] b. Ilaï. A tanna of the third generation, and a pupil of R. Akiba. In the Mishna he is called simply R. Jehudah, and must not be confused with R. Jehudah ha-Nasi who is there called Rabbi. His eloquence gained for him the title of "Chief of the Speakers" (ראש המדברים). Contrary to the edict of Hadrian he was ordained, and had to flee the country, returning after three years to Usha, where he attained a prominent position. As an expounder of the Law his

opinions carried great weight. Most of the Sifra is attributed to him. He was a man of piety and lived an ascetic life, supporting himself by following a trade. Amongst his famous sayings are: "He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him, as it were, robbery" (Kid. 29*a*); "Labour is an honour to every man" (Ned. 49*b*). See Hyman, op. cit., ii., pp. 534-542.

[3] As a sign of mourning, and so sleep on the ground (Moed. Kat. 15*a*). See, however, *Jew. Encycl.* ix. 102.

[4] Neither the opinion of Rabban Simeon nor that R. Jehudah is to be followed (Maimonides).

8. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel said: Israel had no more joyous festivals than the fifteenth of Ab[1] and the Day of Atonement[2]; for on them the daughters of Jerusalem used to go forth in white garments which were borrowed so as not to put to shame those who had none. All the garments were required to be purified; and the daughters of Jerusalem went forth and danced in the vineyards. And what were they saying? Young man, lift up thine eyes, and consider well whom thou wilt choose for thyself; look not on beauty only, but on the family, for it is said,

> Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain;
> A woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised;[3]

and it is also said,

> Give her of the fruit of her hands:
> And let her works praise her in the gates.[4]

And so it says,

> Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon,
> With the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him
> In the day of his espousals,
> And in the day of the gladness of his heart.[5]

"In the day of his espousals,"—an allusion to the promulgation of the Torah: "And in the day of the gladness of his heart,"—when the Temple was built. May it speedily be rebuilt in our days, Amen!

[1] The reasons given being that on that day the tribes were allowed to intermarry (Num. xxxvi. 6); members of the tribe of Benjamin were allowed to intermarry with the other tribes (Judges xxi. 15); the last of those destined to die in the desert died, and so God again spoke to Moses (Deut. ii. 16, 17); the guards appointed by Jeroboam were abolished by Hoshea b. Elah; permission was given to bury the dead after the battle of Bethar; wood for the altar ceased to be cut on that day (Taan. 30*b*). The true explanation is to be sought in the fact that on this day all the people took part in the wood offering (Meg. Taan. V.).

[2] Because it is a day of forgiveness (cf. Pesikta xxiv.; Jer. Rosh Hash. 57*b*), and on that day the second tables of the Law were said to have been given to Moses, and on it the first Temple was dedicated.

[3] Prov. xxxi. 30. [4] ib. xxxi. 31. [5] Cant. iii. 11.

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